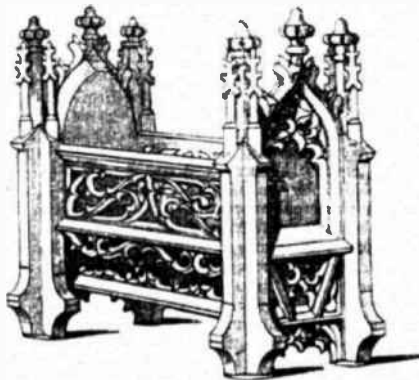
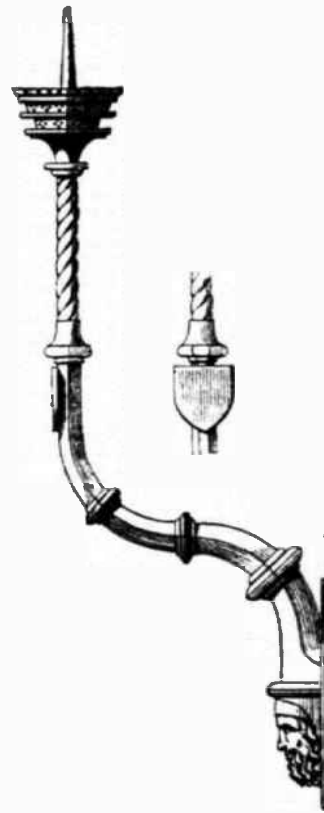




FIGURE OF ST. ANNE TEACHING THE VIRGIN.



CARVED CRADLE, END OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY.



BRANCH FOR CANDLE, TIME OF HENRY V.

THE OMNIBUS MOVEMENT.

As concerning the million, this mode of locomotion has found an echo in *THE BUILDER*, and as to the structure of the rari-fied rotary engines called "Buses," there cannot be a better vehicle of intelligence.

During the summer every description of carriage with four wheels was called into requisition—spring waggons, vans, and, in short, every species of conveyance to which a pair of horses could be attached found full employment at a profitable recompense.

The fares were raised from 3d. to 4d. for short stages; and now that the crowds have returned to their counties and nations, the same rate of charge is exacted*, leaving us, as to accommodation no better off for the model designs shown in the Exposition, and 25 per cent. worse off by the enhanced cost.

All Parisians who used these public carriages remarked on the great inferiority of arrangement with us in allowing the passengers to enter "belter skelter," and take places as if by a scramble, instead of each person occupying Nos. 1, 2, 3, &c., in regular sequence; then, again, the want of arm-rests, to divide the seats, and save the occupants from unequal pressure; the want of altitude and restricted width; but, above all, the imperfect ventilation.

Perhaps the French omnibuses in general are not, as to *external* show, in any degree superior to Hackneys, Mile-ends, or Mother Red-caps; and are even below the standard of Atlases, Waterloos, and cream Bromptons; yet for comfort and orderly regulation they are far superior.

Enter a fourpenny 'bus (if you can) when there are *ten insides*—you mount the step, catch the doorknob or holder (if there is one)—you squeeze on between two pairs of knees, and *straightway* the machine gives a jerk—you are

precipitated on the second pair of occupants—an elderly lady and fat gentleman—for an impassable lock of serried marrowbones forbids progress, until a pull-up and halt restore your equilibrium, and the repercussion forces your head (or new hat) against the roof: then some one more courteous edges towards his neighbour—you drop down, and wedge into close order.

When seated, a novice in town is unconscious of the exact termini on a route where there are no definite stations: he looks for the table of fares which, according to Act of Parliament, should indicate the amount: he can see none; for the inside panel of the door is concealed by the compacted members and the drapery of the *first pair* (there it is that the tariff is judiciously placed "*à l'abri*"), whilst Moses and Son, Nicoll, Hyams, and Standard Sherry, occupy the more prominent exposition at the extreme end, the *only discernible portion* of the interior, save the roof!

The regulation of order in taking seats would cure much of the first inconvenience; a clearly lettered tablet affixed in full view at the central end of the carriage the second; whilst a simple arm or division between each seat would materially add to the comfort and safety (as to pocket) of the passengers.

Lately some few good 'buses have been set up in town, but none of them lofty nor wide enough: from the floor to the roof should be at least *six feet four inches*, as an erect position much facilitates the passage to the end seats: between the seats should be at least *two feet three inches*, for unless the sitters withdraw their knees (turning aside on tiptoe) a lady of delicate limb cannot pass without violence, if not bruises, and a stout woman with profuse garments runs great hazard of lacerated trimmings.

The omnibus from Glasgow, exhibited in the Crystal Palace, is decidedly the best model that has yet appeared: the only fault that could be objected to it is, that no pair of

horses could be adequate to the draught of twenty-six persons.*

The vehicle is certainly the lightest in construction as yet made, and is said to be of great strength, and mayhap is intended for three or more horses: it is, however, certain that no pair of horses should have to drag above twenty persons, or *one ton and a quarter*, which, with a light 'bus of 15 cwt., would make 2 tons.

It is a question whether the excessive number of passengers can pay in the long run, seeing that more frequently there are some vacancies, and that for the occasional overloading the proprietor loses in horseflesh more than the surplus fares.

Like all exactions, the increased fares will be brought down in spite of coalition: the penny 'buses, like penny steamers, when first started, were supposed to be impracticable. The issue may, in like manner, prove that the immensely increased traffic for short distances will continue their advantage to the poorer citizens of London: in fact, it is to them a *boom of inestimable value*. A mile for a penny—it is no more than the scale of charge on the long routes; but how many will take half-a-mile in rain, or heat, or fatigue? To-day I entered one at Regent-circus, stopped, transacted business at New Oxford-street, and again to Gray's-inn, making in all 2d. It has been said the company is not genteel. I saw no difference in dress or demeanour, save that all seemed gratified at the economical arrangement.

The multitude will appreciate and drop into cheap conveyances. Nothing but the half-penny boat is objected to on that score (not being aristocratic), and that I believe principally because the port of destination is the slum and *slime* of Buckingham-wharf.

Let proprietors not fear being too cheap: let them improve the structure of their vehicles: as yet competition is open, and

* A return, we observe, has been made to the 3d. fare since this was written.

* It is designed, we believe, for three abreast.